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### The Price of Experience in Fruit Growing.

The following article won the second prize in a recent competition in the Southern Ruralist.

The writer lives in Tennessee. Notice what he says about cherries. Perhaps the failures with cherries in Florida have been due to cultivation, possibly they might be grown here if kept in a close sod from the first. The experiment is worth trying.

In your October issue you ask the Ruralist readers to send in articles giving their experience with growing and marketing fruit. In response to that request, I will give you some personal experiences, from which your readers may gather some suggestion of practical use. When I came to Tennessee from Texas and located on a small farm—less than twenty acres—in the vicinity of the city of Chattanooga, Tenn., among other things that I desired to do was to plant an orchard, to grow fruit for home use and to sell. One of the first things to do was to select the kind of fruit and the varieties. I had no experience with such an undertaking and could not be assisted materially by the suggestion of others, for but little had then been done in the line of fruit growing in this section. I got catalogues from a number of the prominent nurseries and the alluring

descriptions of the apples, pears, cherries and other fruits made me want to buy some of everything I read about, and that is pretty nearly what I did.

I had no definite plan and no idea how a miscellaneous orchard would look: I found out later how it looked.

I found among the pears many fascinating descriptions like this: "Buttery, melting rich flavor;" or another, "juicy, vinous, rich, sweet flavor with blush on one side," and of another, "fine red cheek, handsome, rich, sweet melting, perfumed flavor," and so on through a list of many varieties. I got enthused on the pear question and bought a few trees of nearly all of them. I went in on the apples, cherries and plums in the same blind way. In my ignorance and enthusiasm I thought they would all grow and produce "rosy cheeked, sweet flavored" fruit like the catalogue description. I planted some of all the kinds in the same orchard, and finding that I had bought more trees than I had room for, I planted the surplus cherry and plum trees in a two acre calf lot. I cultivated all the trees in the orchard alike, grew crops between the rows and kept the land clean of grass and weeds.

The calf lot was set to Bermuda grass, but the cherry trees were scratched around lightly the first two years. The trees in the orchard nearly all started off well and the orchard prospects were bright.

If I had known then what I know now, many hours of toil and much disappointment would have been avoided. How much wasted time at hard work people put in from not knowing what to do and how to do it. Truly, wisdom is the greatest of all possessions, but that is another matter.

After ten years many of the pear trees were dead and all the others were sadly infested with blight, except one kind, the description of which had not been attractive. Its fruit was described as "fine size and good quality" and the tree of a "vigorous constitution." Any one who knows about pears will recognize this as the Kieffer. All the Kieffers did well and bore good crops which sold on the local market at \$1.50 a bushel. I got my eyes opened on the pear business and cut out all the other kinds and put Kieffers in their place. I was likewise disappointed in apples; none gave me any profit, except the horse, the yellow transparent, and early harvest, so I cut out all the others and planted more of these. Of the seventy-five cherry trees planted in the orchard, all were dead, or practically so, in twelve years. The cherries and plums planted in the calf lot in Bermuda sod grew to fine trees and bear large crops every year. They have not missed a full crop in ten years, and a big crop of cherries means money. They can be sold any day anywhere for a good price. The calf lot was used as poultry yard in the spring and early summer when garden operations were going on, and to that fact I attribute the absence of plum curculio and the good crops of plums. It is not within the scope of this article to attempt to give advice as to what kinds of fruits to grow or how to manage an orchard, nor to discuss the diseases and pests affecting fruit trees and fruit. This information should be given by the editors of farm papers and the experiment stations.

I do not feel disposed to give advice, for advice is cheap and so many things have to be considered when one goes to put out an orchard either for home use or for commercial purposes, that an experience in one locality might not be a good basis for calculation in some other sections, where different conditions prevailed. I will say, however, that were I starting again in this section or further south, I should not put out many varieties, but would confine myself to those which had proved good and reliable in my neighborhood and on similar land to mine.

I should go in heavy on early ap-

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ples and sour cherries, using comparatively level, high and well drained land. After getting the land in good tilth and the trees well started, I should put it in grass for hay. Cherry trees will not stand cultivation, but will do well on most any well drained land in sod. It is better to use the orchard for hay crops than allow it to grow up in sassafras bushes. You get money, or its equivalent, for the hay, and better fruit and more of it besides.

### Science of Fish Culture.

There are nations that live very largely upon fish. It is universally accounted good wholesome food. If it is true, as claimed, that an acre of water, well filled with fish, will yield as much food as an acre of the best land, then surely we are neglecting our opportunities. Rev. T. W. Moore D.D. wrote an article, for the Leesburg Commercial, which we quote below:

The best authorities assure us that each acre of water surface may be made equal in food production to a like area of the best land under the best cultivation. Good land in the vicinity of Leesburg readily rents at \$10 per acre. Where planted in orange trees with no frost to interfere, the rent is worth hundreds of dollars per acre. The two lakes, Harris and Griffin, alone have an area of fifty square miles equal to thirty-two thousand acres. At a rental of \$10 per acre, this would yield \$320,000 per annum, as a public domain for Leesburg, if these resources of wealth and pleasure were attached to Leesburg by canals and cultivation, as might be at little cost. These waters give fine sport and to a few fishermen some thousands of dollars' profit. But the fish, unprotected in these lakes as elsewhere in Florida, bring to maturity only about one in a thousand of the eggs laid by the mother fish. To secure even this low percentage of life, the parent bream have to combine against all enemies. Hundreds of them will combine to dig up the grass and bonnets within a circle ten or twelve feet in diameter, carrying outside the circle every particle of matter, save the sand for the floor and the water in which to work. After the bed has been prepared, the parent fish deposit their eggs and by constant movement through the water turns the eggs over and over as a sitting hen turns over her eggs. Until the young fry are hatched and are able to take care of themselves by flight, the parent fish combine to fight off all enemies. If a fish-hook is dropped into the bed, even though the hook may have on it no bait to conceal the hook, some careful mother will take the barbed steel in her mouth, and at the same risk of being caught, will carry it outside the bed. When men have come to the aid of the fish

as high as ninety-seven per cent of the eggs have been hatched and the young fry returned to the water sufficiently strong to care for themselves.

The science of fish culture has grown very rapidly during the last fifty years. The general government and several of the states are now making liberal appropriations to supply certain waters with artificially hatched fry. The increased profit from fisheries so encouraged amounts to many millions of dollars. Some years ago Governor Bloxham, when preparing his address to the Florida Legislature, asked me to write up the facts relative to the possible results of faithful fish culture in Florida. He had the kindness to embody my letter in his address. As a result, the Legislature passed a few laws designed for the protection of the fish, appointed a commissioner and appropriated \$1000 for his support and work. The small appropriation killed the plan that could have made Florida waters and coasts the most productive fisheries in the world. Private individuals, with proper care, can make fish raising a source of both profit and pleasure. Leesburg with but little expense, could so fill the waters of Lakes Harris and Griffin with fish as not only to bring in tens of thousands of dollars to the fishermen but draw tourists from all parts of our great country to enjoy the sport of angling. This would mean to Leesburg more and well filled hotels, more residents and greater prosperity.

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